



meeting **ENVIRONMENT STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE**

date **29 June 2004**

agenda item no

Report of the Director for Environment

STREET LIGHTING PERFORMANCE – OUTAGE AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH CENTRAL NETWORKS (FORMERLY EAST MIDLANDS ELECTRICITY)

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members on progress in reducing Street Lighting outage in Nottinghamshire (the percentage of street lights not working as planned), and in trying to secure a worthwhile Service Level Agreement with Central Networks (the electricity distribution company responsible for the electricity supply to 97% of Nottinghamshire's street lights).

Background

2. Street lighting outage in Nottinghamshire is measured on a quarterly basis using a nationally defined formula. It is measured for each of the three directly maintained areas (Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood, and Rushcliffe – excluding West Bridgford) and for each of the five District Council Agent maintained areas (Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield and Rushcliffe – West Bridgford only).

Outage

3. There is a target level of 1.4% or less for lights out and performance for the period 1999 – 2004 is shown on the attached graph. The following trends are clear:-
 - a) An overall Countywide improvement leading to compliance with our outage target.
 - b) A very significant improvement in the directly maintained areas.

- c) A slight improvement in the performance of the three Agents who will be transferring to Manage and Operate Partnership Arrangements from April 2005 (Ashfield, Broxtowe and Mansfield).
 - d) A significant worsening in the performance of the two Agent areas (although actual performance is still significantly “better” than the other three Agents)
4. Future improvements and continued achievement of the target will therefore need to concentrate on:-
- a) Sustaining the improvement in the current directly maintained areas.
 - b) Reversing the trend in the two Agent areas.
 - c) Speeding up the trend in performance improvement in the three remaining Agent areas. In Ashfield and Mansfield increased budget allocations for 2004/05 and beyond should help. In Broxtowe there has been concern as to the lamp type used and it is hoped that the use of higher specification lamps will reduce outage in future years.
5. Street light outage is of course mostly caused by problems with the lights themselves (our responsibility), but also with their electricity supply (97% Central Networks responsibility 3% Yorkshire Electricity responsibility). The performance of these two Electricity Distribution Network operators is therefore also important in reducing street lighting outage.

Service Level Agreement with Central Networks (Formerly East Midlands Electricity EME)

- 6. Members may recall that the EME changed its sub-contractors around Christmas 2002 and that this change led to a significant deterioration in performance for those street light repairs which are their responsibility (ie their cables). Performance has rallied since then, but is still poor – both in terms of their reporting of performance and their actual performance.
- 7. Cable repair work on Central Network’s mains is non-competitive under primary legislation. This means that this particular aspect of their work is a monopoly and is not fully overseable by the regulator (Ofgem). There is therefore little the County Council can do to secure improved performance as there is no contract with Central Networks.
- 8. The then EME voluntarily offered a Service Level Agreement in mid 2003. This offered a 20 working day repair response (effectively one calendar month) against the required standard of seven calendar days. The County Council asked them to reduce this to 15 working days but this was refused. Negotiations faltered as the supplier was not able to commit to carrying out repairs in 15 working days.

7. More positively, Ofgem is shortly to issue a National Service Level Agreement which it is hoped that all Distribution Network Operations (such as Central Networks) will adopt. The County Council has been asked to supply general comments on performance to Ofgem by 15 July 2004 to try and assist their case with Central Government. Again, however, in the absence of a change in the primary legislation, it is mostly voluntary and the monopoly remains.

PETER WEBSTER
Director of Environment

17.6.04

JDenv.25 - committee file

Nottinghamshire County Council - Street Lighting Outage 1999-2004

